LITERATURE TRANSCRIBED
INTO "BRAILLE"

PAN AMERICAN UNION

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industry from the viewpoint not only of women as wage earners but of women as wives and mothers.

From the noteworthy contributions and animated discussions at this conference it may be confidently expected that there will result not only increased interest in the problems of the large number of employed women in the United States but more intelligent legislation and greater cooperation in their behalf as an important factor in the industrial life of the Nation, especially when it is realized, as Secretary Davis has pointed out, that one of every four workers is a woman and one of every four women is a worker.

LITERATURE TRANSCRIBED INTO "BRAILLE"[1]

"BOOKS are gates to lands of pleasure" is as true for the blind as for those who see. It matters not whether the thought from the printed page reaches the mind through the eye or the finger tips, the quickening, the delight are the same.

Gutenberg with his printing press made books available to the masses. Louis Braille with his system of dots in relief gave the blind books to read for themselves, and gave them also a medium for writing. The reading and writing of a code of raised dots greatly facilitates the education of the blind in general, and it is invaluable to blind boys and girls going through college. With its aid blind men and women master the technique of business and professions in which they succeed. Through a Braille book many a blinded soldier caught the first ray of hope that enabled him to link his old life with the new.

The first Braille was written in France in 1829. Since then it has passed through many changes until it has become the universal type for the blind, adapted to every language in which they are taught. Now there are three ways of producing Braille: It may be written by hand, one dot at a time, with a slate and stylus; it may be produced on a Braille "writer," where an entire character is made at a single stroke; or it may be embossed on brass plates from which many editions can be published with a printing press. The last is obviously the best way, but, unfortunately, it is also a very expensive way. It costs $5 a thousand words to stereotype the metal plates,

[1] Compiled and condensed by Elsie Brown, Pan American Union Staff, from *Writing for the Blind*, and *Annual Report on Braille Transcribing by American Red Cross*, July, 1924–1925, by Gertrude T. Rider, director of Braille, American Red Cross, and librarian for the blind, Library of Congress, in collaboration with Adelia M. Hoyt.

in industry. Our industrial success will depend largely upon the practices in industry which make for the health and happiness of women workers. It is with this in mind that we are calling the conference and urge the fullest participation by the women of the country.

An extremely interesting program was arranged for the conference, with speakers representative of employers, workers and the most progressive thought among persons not actually engaged in industry. At the opening session on the evening of January 18 addresses were made by the Hon. James J. Davis, Secretary of Labor, and by two women members of the Congress of the United States. The topic for the next morning, "The development and expansion of industry," was discussed in the light of its social significance: to the employer, by Mr. John E. Edgerton, president of the National Association of Manufacturers; to the worker, by Mr. William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor; and to society in general, by Miss Mary Van Kleeck, director of the Division of Industrial Studies of the Russell Sage Foundation.

In the afternoon problems of industrial relations were considered from the point of view of both theory and practice, the speakers being Mr. William Leiserson, professor of labor economics, Toledo University; Miss Frances Perkins, member of the New York State Industrial Commission; Miss Agnes Nestor, vice president of the International Glove Workers' Union, and Mr. Henry P. Kendall, a prominent textile manufacturer.

On the morning of January 20 Miss Belle Sherwin, president of the National League of Women Voters, presided over the meeting, which was devoted to social problems, including the right of the woman worker to citizenship, education, and recreation. In the afternoon Mrs. John D. Sherman, president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, was the presiding officer, the subject being health problems, and the speakers two of the most notable authorities on public health questions in the United States—Dr. Hugh S. Cumming, Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service, and Dr. Alice Hamilton, professor of industrial medicine in the Harvard Medical School and member of the Health Committee of the League of Nations.

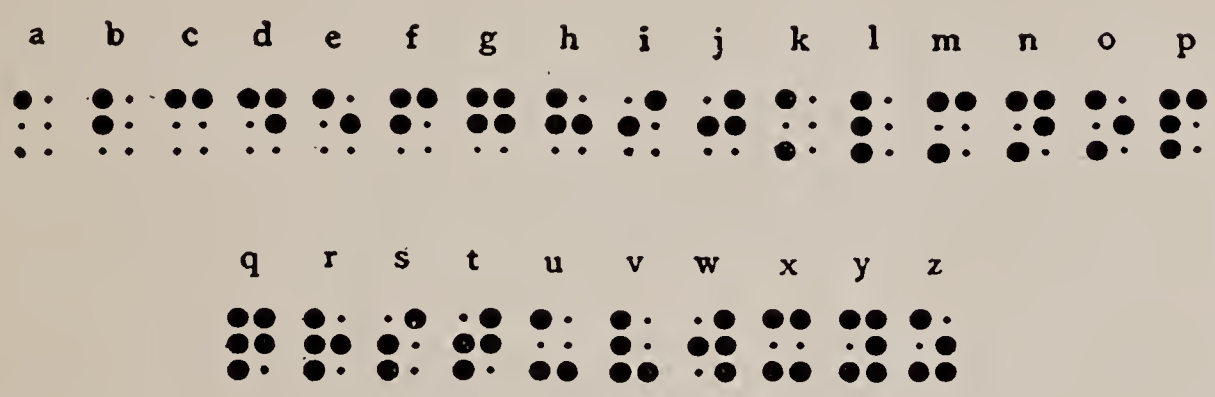
The two remaining sessions were devoted to a symposium on "The woman wage earner—why be concerned about the conditions under which she works and lives," the speakers representing the woman worker, the consumer, business, the church, and State and National Governments. Since, as Secretary Davis said in his letter of indorsement, the employment of married women has increased 88 per cent in the last decade, one of the problems to which the closest attention was given was that of the married woman who works to support her family, thus bringing under discussion conditions in

after which there is the expense of embossing the paper sheets and binding them.

Dots produced by hand, either with slate or writer, are quite as satisfactory as those made by machinery. "Writers" similar in principle to the typewriter now cost from $32 to $50, and with one of these an expert can produce six to nine pages of Braille an hour. With practice on the slate, one may write four pages an hour. The slate has the advantage of being even more inexpensive ($2) and easily carried about. The only disadvantage to handwork is the fact that but a single copy can be made at a time, but, as will be explained later, a method has recently been devised for the multiplication, to some extent, of copies.

REVISED BRAILLE

Prior to 1917 two slightly different Braille systems (American Braille and New York point) were used in the United States. In



THE BRAILLE ALPHABET

that year after long and careful investigation and experiment, revised Braille, grade 1½, was officially adopted. This was a great step ahead, as it left but one system in use and that one uniform with those in other countries. This system is based on the original Braille alphabet and corresponds to English Braille.

In the following year (1918) the Red Cross Institute, popularly known as "Evergreen," was established at Baltimore, Md., for the training of the United States soldiers and sailors blinded in the World War. Braille was one of the first subjects taught, since reading by touch is an excellent preliminary training for the fingers of the newly blind. Right here a difficulty presented itself. Obviously, the new system would be taught to blinded soldiers, but at that time there were only six books in that type, and those were for children. Moreover, the American Printing House for the Blind at Louisville, Ky., was then, and still is, obliged to use nearly all the public money appropriated for printing books for the blind ($50,000 per annum) in supplying texts and other books for the blind school children of the country.

Now it is always difficult to persuade a man, newly blinded, to attempt to read with his fingers, and it is therefore most essential that he should have something to read he really cares for.

In this dilemma, Mrs. Gertrude T. Rider, librarian for the blind in the Library of Congress at Washington, volunteered her services and was made directing librarian at the Red Cross Institute, and to her the instructors turned for help. The story of how she met the needs of these new blind readers and built up a library of over 1,200 volumes is most unusual and interesting.

There were many women and some men throughout the country who wanted to do something for the blinded soldier. From among these Mrs. Rider organized a band of volunteers to learn Braille transcribing. In an incredibly short time she was able to place in the hands of the blind soldiers at Evergreen editorials from current magazines, topics of the day, short stories, etc., in the Braille type.

As the men learned to read with greater facility and the transcribers became more proficient, more and more extensive work was undertaken until at the present time there is nothing these devoted copyists will not and can not do. Undaunted by long lists of anatomical terms, they have aided the masseur; they have helped the student of French by putting his lessons into Braille; they are always ready to transcribe just what is most needed, whether for entertainment or serious study.

As a result of their efforts the library at Evergreen has grown until it contains 1,200 hand-copied volumes covering a wide range of subjects. There are small books for beginners, standard works for the English student, many good short stories, and some popular novels.

This collection was augmented by the press-made books available for adults. Many of these were "brailled" through the American Library Association, which interested itself in soliciting authors, publishers, clubs, and individuals to finance the making of books primarily for the blinded soldiers.

THE RED CROSS AND BRAILLE

Of the American Red Cross the Chicago Chapter was the first to undertake Braille transcribing as a real activity. Its service to the cause in those early days can not be overestimated. Chicago was soon followed by St. Paul, Minn., Washington, D. C., and Providence, R. I.

In October, 1921, the American Red Cross at National Headquarters became officially connected with Braille transcribing, and at the Red Cross Convention held in Columbus, Ohio, October 4–8, 1921, there was a Braille exhibit which attracted the attention of many delegates. As a result of this and further efforts of the Red Cross, many chapters adopted Braille transcribing as apart of their *volunteer*

service. The conventions of 1922 and 1923, held in Washington, D. C., still further increased the interest.

In England, where some Braille printing is endowed by the Carnegie Trust Fund, hand copying has long been in vogue. A hand-copied book will last for years if done on suitable paper and properly shellacked. "Westward Ho!" by Charles Kingsley, transcribed for the Library of Congress over 17 years ago, has just been removed from circulation because the corners of the pages are deeply broken. The dots, however, are still perfectly good.

A 9 by 11 inch page is the standard size adopted for hand-copied books, and it will contain only about half the text printed on the average page of an ordinary 8vo. book. The usual novel copied into Braille makes from seven to nine volumes, as large as can be conveniently handled.

Because of the bulk and cost of Braille books, there are few private collections. Readers prefer to borrow from well-equipped libraries having facilities for circulating. By a provision of Congress, books for the blind go through the mails free of charge when loaned by a library or returned there by a borrower.

Although larger funds have been made available for printing Braille books, although hand-copying has steadily grown, and lending libraries are giving increasing service, the supply of reading matter nevertheless falls far short of demand.

What the volunteer has done for the war blind is needed also for the civilian blind. Blind students and persons in the professions need special material. Many readers long for more popular and up-to-date books. Because of the great cost and the fact that the editions needed are small, Braille printing can never be done on a commercial basis. Unless a vast endowment is forthcoming, these wants will never be met save by the volunteer copyist.

The Red Cross has long been a symbol for help in time of need. It has lighted the way to rescue in time of disaster, carried food to the hungry, and comfort to the desolate. Why should it not aid the blind by helping to give them a better supply of books? So it is that under the fostering care of the Red Cross, transcribing has steadily grown until there are certified workers from Maine to California and from Florida to Washington.

What of the results? First, *books*, more than 2,000 of them, covering a wide range of subjects: fiction by the best modern authors, biography, history, travel, essays, the drama.

It is difficult to express what these books meant to the blinded soldier just after the close of the war. They stimulated his interest in reading, and reading once more for himself in many cases proved a keynote to rehabilitation. Their own words best show their appreciation. A blind lieutenant writes:

The work was well-nigh perfect. My thanks go to the transcriber, the Red Cross, and all who are working to make this splendid service a living force. My hope is that some day I may be able to repay the kindness by bringing the same service to another one situated as I was when the only avenue of help open to me was that of volunteer Braille transcribing.

THE HOPE OF THE FUTURE

The transcription of books by volunteers has awakened interest in the blind who, until then, had seemed to many a class apart—different in some intangible way. Braille proved the common ground on which they met and understood each other. No one who has punched a page of Braille can any longer be a stranger to the blind, or indifferent to their problems.

Transcribing has won recognition in the United States. The American Foundation for the Blind has indorsed the work as established and carried on by the American Red Cross, and has offered substantial assistance and cooperation. The head of one of the departments of the Foundation recently stated that hand-copied books are the hope of the future for blind readers.

Transcribing is not easy. It is puzzling, but intriguing; exacting, but satisfying. Persons of average intelligence and fair education can master it, but to do the accurate work required one must have patience and perseverance, the ability to concentrate and to exercise care in small details. The Red Cross solicits volunteers. It provides a course of instruction which is given by correspondence, or, where possible, through local teachers. At the end of the course a certificate of proficiency is awarded.

Any attempt to popularize transcribing as a means of securing large numbers of students is a waste of time, effort, and money. It is only for the picked workers prepared to give a quiet hour a day and loyal devotion. There is only one standard of work, namely, perfection.

The spirit in which any work is done determines its character and success. The unprecedented success of volunteer transcribing may be explained both by the wish to serve others and by the challenge and self-help people find in it. Before mastering Braille and afterwards, workers meet real difficulties and discouragements, but their letters reveal a beautiful spirit which the work seems to engender:

It seems to me that one of the greatest advantages offered by the Red Cross in this work is that it is a link between those who need a helping hand and those who are eager to lend it.

Braille may, with sufficient practice, be mastered in a course of 10 lessons which has been prepared under the auspices of the American National Red Cross and can be undertaken by the student either by correspondence, as stated, or in small classes under the instruction of a qualified local teacher. These are followed by a test and the copying

of a 50 page trial manuscript. When the manuscript is favorably reported the student is awarded a Red Cross certificate of proficiency in Braille transcribing and is authorized to produce transcriptions which will be bound and circulated through the Library of Congress or various other libraries in the United States that serve blind readers.

DEVELOPMENTS IN 1924–25

During the year 1924–25 there was a constant effort to accomplish certain things: To bring the work up to date; to weed out poor and undesirable manuscripts and make them serve useful purposes; to arrange with local libraries for the wider ownership of hand-copied books; to put students and other blind persons in touch with transcribers willing to copy for their special needs; to standardize paper of durable quality; to train blind proof readers with a view to having them work directly, where practical, with local groups of braillists so that manuscript can be proof read before it is sent to Washington; to lessen correspondence by encouraging transcribers to find the answers to questions in printed instructions; to prepare a manual on Braille transcribing which would contain under one cover all lessons, rules, and other information, revised and arranged so as to be useful, for reference, to both students and certified workers; and finally to perfect the Garin process of duplicating hand-copied Braille.

It is impossible to get statistics that show the amount of work copied for blind students and other individuals. Workers are too modest to make anything like an adequate report. We know that a great deal has been done of which we have no record. One chapter is helping to prepare textbooks for a blind school in Armenia. Blind college students and business men are being aided by the copying of law and insurance texts, French, Latin, Greek, etc. Perhaps the greatest single achievement of the year was the brailling of Homer's *Odyssey* from the Greek text for blind university students.

The selection of suitable paper has been a matter of considerable study. In this the Bureau of Standards of the United States has aided. After many tests a certain 74-pound star jute manilla proved the best adapted to the making of hand-copied Braille books, and it is resold by National Headquarters. It is earnestly hoped that no transcriber will waste time and effort on other paper.

In order to train blind persons to become competent proof readers it was found necessary to prepare a special course of study. This was done about a year and a half ago. Since then more than 50 persons have enrolled for the course. Some have failed to qualify, others are still in training. About 30 have finished satisfactorily. In a number of localities proof readers have been trained to work directly with local braillists, and the finished books go, when the transcriber so indicates, to a local library. Boston Metropolitan Chapter has

effected such an arrangement with the Perkins Institution library. The manuscripts go directly from the transcriber to the proof reader. In the correcting of these manuscripts the transcribers assist. The books are then shellacked by local volunteers. The leader of the group and the proof reader keep the National Director notified of manuscripts received, proof read and presented to that library. In Detroit the Junior League (an organization of young society women) employs a qualified young blind woman who supervises the Braille work of the League, giving instruction, proof-reading manuscript and keeping the national director of Braille well informed concerning the quantity and quality of all work produced.

In this connection it is interesting to note the avenue by which the local Red Cross chapter in Washington succeeded in having 10,805 pages of Braille shellacked in 1924–25, work which does not require as much practice or application as the actual writing, although it must be carefully done. In cooperation with the various churches of the city, groups of volunteers, numbering 296 in all, were organized for this work, meeting twice monthly, and rendering valuable service.

The publishing of the new Red Cross Manual on Hand-Transcribing is one of the outstanding events of the year. This manual contains all the information hitherto issued in separate leaflets. It has been revised, enlarged, and brought up to date. It is the result of five years' experience in training sighted volunteers to transcribe Braille acceptable to libraries and blind readers. The course of study contained in it has proven eminently satisfactory, both when used with a local teacher and when followed along with correspondence aid. The lessons have been enlarged, rules somewhat elaborated to clarify the doubtful points, and the whole arranged as a reference book for students and workers.

DUPLICATION

The Red Cross expects to enhance the value of the single copies of books produced by hand by duplicating them. The plan for duplicating follows the process invented by a French architect, M. Garin.

Several years ago a volunteer braillist, Mrs. Louise Shipman Hubbard, spent her vacation learning duplicating in Paris and brought back the outfit used there for the work. With the inventor's approval his process has been experimented with and improved upon for our use. Briefly described, the process here used is to write Braille on sheets of oiled paper, either those oiled by hand or those bought on the market already oiled; after corrections have been made each page of Braille is laid, embossed side down, on a piece of wool-velvet carpet or felt, and with a glazier's knife into the depressions is pushed a mixture of plaster of Paris and glue. When this composition hardens the paper plates are sufficiently durable to run through a press for printing one hundred or more copies.

Successful duplications have been secured from Braille written on selected slates and from that written on Hall-Braille writers and Braille writers, but it has been found that to achieve the best results writers must be altered to make a dot with greater relief, and that a duplicating slate modeled after the French one must be made. The slate will vary from those now in use by having slightly deeper pits and a pitted back the size of the page to be written.

The manufacturers of Braille writers have indicated their readiness to alter their output to meet the requirements for duplication when the specifications are assured, and plans have been drawn up for a duplicating slate.

The head of the research department of the American Foundation for the Blind characterizes the duplicating of hand-copied work as "one of the brightest rays of hope which has yet been shed upon the dark problem of how to furnish the blind with an adequate supply of embossed literature."

A work begun for the war blind with a few devoted workers now numbers 674 certified transcribers and approximately 500 students, representing 127 Red Cross chapters and societies in 32 States.

In New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Boston, Pittsburgh, and Maryville, Mo., Braille units are beginning to function with only necessary national supervision and report.

American Red Cross statistical report on Braille, July, 1924–25

HAND-COPIED MANUSCRIPT

Hand-copied pages received from transcribers	106, 087
Hand-copied pages produced for students and individuals	3, 684
Hand-copied pages produced, proof read and bound in Chicago	6, 022
Total number of pages produced by Red Cross volunteers	115, 793
Total manuscripts prepared for binding:	
Titles	159
Volumes	867
Pages	82, 882

OWNERSHIP

Completed manuscript bound and circulated by the Library of Congress:	
Titles	128
Volumes	741
Pages	70, 950
Completed manuscript bound and circulated by other libraries:	
Titles	38
Volumes	150
Pages	14, 292

Additional information in regard to Braille may be secured by writing direct to the Red Cross Director of Braille Transcribing, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

RAISING PIGS IN THE TROPICS

POSSIBILITIES OF THE PORK INDUSTRY IN CUBA[1]

By George Reno

SINCE the first evidence of man on earth, that most useful pachyderm, known in English as the pig, and in Spanish as "el puerco," has played an important part in the economy of man. He, in company with most of his thick-skinned cousins, the mastodon, hippopotamus, etc., had his origin in that great warm basin of central Asia known to-day as the Desert of Gobi. Some of his kind gradually worked west into the dense forests of central Europe, and finally developed into the wild boars of the Black Forest country. These are probably the ancestors of our domestic pig.

In the caves of southern France, where the Cro-Magnon race, of the Neolithic age, made its home ten or twenty thousand years ago, are found quite artistic drawings of wild boars, sketched in charcoal and in colored earths on the smooth walls of the cave. Alongside the pig, too, the ancestors of the horse, which at that time was used for food, are also found.

When the Spanish colonists who followed in the wake of Columbus became tired of the search for gold and concluded to make a home in Cuba, the first step in animal industry was to send back to Spain for breeding animals. Among these came the parents, or progenitors, of the present native pig or "puerco criollo," some of which escaped from control and lived in the dense forests of the mountains, where the palmiche of the royal palms, and the many native fruits, pomarrosa, guayaba, etc., furnished them with food.

The mountain streams gave the pig water to drink and wallow in, while the climate, never cold, was to his liking. Wild dogs, escaping from homes, had also taken to the woods, and were his only enemies, but with these the long-tusked leader of the herd put up a pretty good fight, and so nature maintained its equilibrium, until in later years, man stepped in, took care of and fed the pigs, improving the breed and bringing them again into a state of domestication. There are many droves, even to-day, of semiwild pigs in various sections of the forest-covered mountains of Cuba.

[1] *The Cuba Review*, New York, October, 1925.

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